

What is claimed as being new and desired to be protected by Letters Patent of the United States is as follows:

1. An apparatus to electronically automate the sorting of chicken feet in the category of edible or inedible, comprising:

a sensing means for tracking the chicken feet and the associated processed chicken;

a programmable means to track and store information received by said sensing means; and

a communication means between said sensing means and said programmable means.

2. An apparatus according to claim 1, wherein said sensing means comprises at least one photoelectric sensor and at least one inductive sensor.

3. An apparatus according to claim 1, wherein said programmable means comprises a

programmable logic card.

4. An apparatus according to claim 1, wherein said communication means comprises a

data bus communication cable.

5. An apparatus according to claim 2, wherein said photoelectric sensor monitors chicken

line movement and said inductive sensor monitor trolley movement.

6. An apparatus according to claim 1, wherein said programmable means receives reject

information from an inspector reject button and compares said reject information to the information received from said sensing means.

7. An apparatus according to claim 1, wherein said programmable means compares said

information received from said sensing means to an electronic model stored in said programmable means.

8. A process to electronically automate the sorting of chicken feet in the category of edible or inedible, comprising:

a) monitoring chicken line movement using at least one photoelectric sensor;

b) monitoring trolley movement using at least one inductive sensor;

c) transferring information received from said photoelectric sensor and said inductive sensor to a programming means; and

d) identifying, when the chicken feet are rejected as inedible, using said programming means, the processed chicken with its associated inedible chicken feet.

9. A process according to Claim 8 wherein said programming means is a programmable logic card.

10. A process according to Claim 8 wherein said photoelectric sensor monitors line movement and verify the presence of chickens in shackles.

11. A process according to Claim 9 wherein said programmable logic card monitors its electronic programmed model of the chicken lines against the actual chicken line data measured by said photoelectric sensor and said inductive sensor.

12. A process to electronically automate the sorting of chicken feet in the category of edible or inedible, comprising:

- a) transferring input data from photoelectric sensors and inductive sensors located at various locations on at least one chicken process line;
- b) receiving said input data from said photoelectric sensors and said inductive sensors into a programming means;
- c) interpreting the data in said programming means and updating the programmed internal electronic model in said programming means;
- d) synchronizing the location of the chicken feet and the location of the

processed chicken in a said programming means;

e) interfacing with the inspector reject button so that when the chicken feet are determined to be inedible, then said programming means identifies the processed chicken and its associated inedible chicken feet.

13. A process according to Claim 12 wherein said programming means is a programmable logic card.

14. A process according to Claim 12 wherein said photoelectric sensors monitor line movement and verify the presence of chickens in shackles.

15. A process according to Claim 13 wherein said programmable logic card monitors its electronic programmed model of the chicken lines against the actual chicken line data measured by said photoelectric sensor and said inductive sensor.